



Kingston Conservation Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
October 4, 2012 6:30-8:30pm

Attendance:

Julie Noble, Chair
Lillian Childress
Judith Deming
Casey Schwarz
Gregg Swanzey

Guests:

Diane Bonavita
Emilie Hauser
Ann Loeding
Sandy Snyder
Claire Surovell
Keith White

Meeting Minutes

The September 2012 CAC minutes were accepted with no amendments; Casey moved to accept, Gregg seconded. Motion Carried.

Old Business

CAC Membership

The Kingston CAC is able to have 9 members appointed by the Mayor. Currently there are 6 members, and most of the terms expire around January 1, 2013. Previous conversations with council members on interest for reappointment result in 4 positions available for new appointments as of January 1st. Julie spoke with the group about the history of the CAC and about the new proposed initiatives for 2013. Upcoming projects of interest include the Sea Level Rise Task Force, Open Space Planning, and Conservation/Sustainability Policies for City development. She explained that the appointment process would be for any interested residents to submit applications, which are available on the city of Kingston website, or the Kingston CAC website, to Julie by the end of November. At that point, the CAC members would review applications and make recommendations to the Mayor for appointments starting in January. Terms are two years, at the appointment of the Mayor and all members must reside in Kingston.

Climate Action Plan

The Climate Action Plan has been formally adopted by the full Common Council, supported by the Public Safety/General Government Committee. Julie attended the Public Safety meeting last Thursday, September 27th to present the final Draft of the Plan for adoption. At that meeting, the Plan and process were well accepted. Julie sent language for the Resolution to the Clerk, who put it together for the full Council to vote on Tuesday October 2. In the interim between both meetings, there were some questions from one Council member, Alderman Senor, as to whether this would prevent development in Kingston. Ultimately, at the Common Council meeting on October 2nd, the Plan was adopted unanimously, with no comments.

The next step for the Climate Action Plan is for the Climate Smart Task Force to convene to create a plan for transitioning to the new committee which will be tasked with implementation of the pledge. The next CSTF meeting is October 19th at City Hall. The new committee, which will also be renamed, may or may not be formalized under the city government and the mayor, and will have members representing each sector that is covered in the Climate Action Plan. This group will create a plan for prioritizing the recommendations and will do a cost benefit analysis of recommendations to create a plan for action. There was a recommendation for the Climate Action Plan Executive Summary to be posted online separately from the full Plan.

Sea Level Rise Task Force

There was a planning meeting on September 25th for the Sea Level Rise Task Force, which is now named the Tidal Rondout Waterfront Flooding Task Force. The group met to discuss time lines, populating the committee, and scope of the project. It was decided that this group would focus on the Tidal Rondout waterfront, as this is the water body directly effecting Kingston as far as storm surge and sea level rise, though it is understood that there are other areas of flooding concern in Kingston. The Mayor is on board with this initiative and together with city and project partners will be outreaching to local stakeholders to be involved. The timeframe for this project is 4-6 months, starting as soon as possible. This is being done under the leadership of Scenic Hudson and the Hudson River Estuary Program, partnering with City staff. Julie and Gregg sit on this Task Force.

New Business

Scope of CAC Work for 2013

1) Green Guide for Kingston

After much discussion about the usability and scope of a Green Guide for Kingston, the group decided that the scope should be to outline City Services, especially in the areas of Landscaping, Food Production, Resource Management, and Energy Conservation. Judith will continue to work on this as the group decided that this could be valuable for new and existing Kingston residents. This would be available on the CAC website, at least, if not also in print.

2) Open Space Plan for Kingston

The group discussed what the process would be to create an open space plan for Kingston, using the data that exists through the Esopus Creek Biodiversity Study that the group had conducted two years ago, and with new data from Hudsonia that was being collected, and then compiling data that is available online through Ulster County and other databases. This would create the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) for Kingston from which the CAC would work with planners to create recommendations for an open space plan. Examples should be looked at from other municipalities. This NRI and Open Space Plan would be extremely valuable to contribute to the Comprehensive Plan, and so the time frame would need to be pretty immediate.

3) Conservation Guidelines for Developers

The CAC discussed the value of developing a set of conservation guidelines for developers and for the planning board to use with decision making. Gregg and Julie had previously had a meeting with Kyla Haber and Steve Johnson regarding this and started the process but didn't end of having the capacity to continue working on it. This should be a priority for 2013. It will be important to work with Planning and Engineering on this project.

4) Scope of Recommendations for Planning Board Reviews

Though a CAC representative attends each Kingston Planning Board meeting monthly, it was discussed that there has never been a scope of recommendations that the CAC can and will make in regards to new and existing development and planning decisions in Kingston considering CAC environmental background and expertise. This scope should be outlined in 2013 and the process for making recommendations to the Planning Board in a consistent, professional and timely matter should be formalized. The Climate Action Plan should be used as a guide for developing the scope.

Also suggested for consideration for 2013 initiatives:

- 1) Watershed Plan for the Rondout
- 2) Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) and Green Infrastructure initiatives

Reports

Planning Board

Casey attended the last Planning Board meeting and made the following follow up comments:

1. The site plan has been approved for the Lace Factory.
2. Sailor's Cove is back on the docket with seemingly minimal adjustments to the project plans, though they seem amenable to working with the city planners. This project is located in the floodplain.

NEXT MEETING: November 1, 2012, 6:30pm

Adjournment: 8:36pm, Casey moved to adjourn, Gregg seconded.